

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations of eligibility for individual properties or districts. See instructions in *Guidelines for Completing National Register Forms* (National Register Bulletin 16). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the requested information. If an item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, styles, materials, and areas of significance, enter only the categories and subcategories listed in the instructions. For additional space use continuation sheets (Form 10-900a). Type all entries.

1. Name of Property

historic name Lafayette Historic District

other names/site number 60-418

Lots on the west side of Main Street (VA Route 626) north and south sides
of Church Street (VA Route 740) and south and north sides of

street & number VA Route 756

N/A not for publication

city, town Lafayette

N/A vicinity

state Virginia

code VA

county Montgomery

code 121

zip code 24108

3. Classification

Ownership of Property

- ☒ private
☐ public-local
☐ public-State
☐ public-Federal

Category of Property

- ☐ building(s)
☒ district
☐ site
☐ structure
☐ object

Number of Resources within Property

Contributing	Noncontributing
<u>19</u>	<u>4</u> buildings
<u>0</u>	<u>0</u> sites
<u>0</u>	<u>0</u> structures
<u>0</u>	<u>0</u> objects
<u>19</u>	<u>4</u> Total

Name of related multiple property listing: Prehistoric and
Historic Resources of Montgomery County

Number of contributing resources previously
listed in the National Register 0

4. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended, I hereby certify that this
☒ nomination ☐ request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the
National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60.
In my opinion, the property ☒ meets ☐ does not meet the National Register criteria. ☐ See continuation sheet.

W. C. Miller
Signature of certifying official

19 Nov 1990
Date

Director, Virginia Division of Historic Landmarks

State or Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property ☐ meets ☐ does not meet the National Register criteria. ☐ See continuation sheet.

Signature of commenting or other official

Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

5. National Park Service Certification

I, hereby, certify that this property is:

- ☐ entered in the National Register.
☐ See continuation sheet.
☐ determined eligible for the National
Register. ☐ See continuation sheet.
☐ determined not eligible for the
National Register.
☐ removed from the National Register.
☐ other, (explain): _____

Signature of the Keeper

Date of Action

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions (enter categories from instructions)

Domestic: single dwelling

Commercial/trade: store

Government: post office

Religion: religious structure

Current Functions (enter categories from instructions)

Domestic: single dwelling

Vacant/ not in use

Religion: religious structure

Industry/ processing/ extractive: manufacturing facility (pottery)

7. Description

Architectural Classification

(enter categories from instructions)

Other: single-pen plan

Other: center-passage plan

Other: nave plan

Other: 20th-century commercial

Materials (enter categories from instructions)

foundation stone: limestone

walls wood: weatherboard

brick

roof metal: tin

other

Describe present and historic physical appearance.

SUMMARY DESCRIPTION

Lafayette is a small village located at the confluence of the north and south forks of the Roanoke River. While the village tends to flood during occasional high water periods, most of the district is elevated slightly above the flood plain. The village takes the form today of four square blocks with a single entrance road at the northeast corner, VA Route 626. The blocks occupy an area approximately 800 feet square, with added lots around the periphery extending to the water's edge on the northeast and northwest and into the hills on the southeast and southwest. The village and district includes principally single-family dwellings of frame construction dating from ca. 1830-1940. At the central intersection of the cross streets stands the ca. 1847 Methodist church. The intersection originally contained a square muster ground, now unmarked.

ARCHITECTURAL ANALYSIS

The village's oldest houses are the Pepper House (60-418-10) and the Preston Waskey House (60-418-11). The Pepper House, a frame house set at an angle to the grid, contains a log single-pen structure built before 1829. Some interior trim remains, but the basement with its large brick fireplace and exposed log joists is the best preserved area. The Preston Waskey House (60-418-11) is one of the county's oldest frame houses. Built in the second quarter of the nineteenth century (probably 1829), it utilized the hall-parlor or two-room form. The weatherboarded two-story house has an exterior brick chimney on the southeast end and features beaded horizontal board sheathing in the principal room. The enclosed stair rises along the board partition. An additional partition has been inserted later to create an ad hoc form. A two-story ell is an addition.

The Lafayette Methodist Church is one of the two oldest churches in the county, built about the same time as the old Blacksburg Presbyterian Church (ca. 1847). The five-bay nave-plan church with its molded brick cornice is unusual for its period and for its large scale and substantial building material. The Flemish-bond southwest gable end is apparently the original front, but there

2. Statement of Significance

Certifying official has considered the significance of this property in relation to other properties:

☐ nationally ☐ statewide ☒ locally

Applicable National Register Criteria ☒ A ☐ B ☒ C ☐ D

Criteria Considerations (Exceptions) ☐ A ☐ B ☐ C ☐ D ☐ E ☐ F ☐ G

Areas of Significance (enter categories from instructions)

Architecture

Exploration/Settlement

Period of Significance

ca. 1825-1940

Significant Dates

N/A

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Significant Person

N/A

Architect/Builder

Unknown

State significance of property, and justify criteria, criteria considerations, and areas and periods of significance noted above.

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The Lafayette Historic District is significant under criterion C because the buildings exhibit the architectural development of the town and the gradual infill of the district's lots during its slow growth over more than a century. The district is also significant for exploration/settlement under criterion A as a good example of an early nineteenth-century turnpike town retaining much of its original plan and including the site of a very unusual square or muster ground at one of the two intersections in the center of the original plan. This plan is typical of small towns from the period, except that the inclusion of the partially obscured, unusual muster ground has the potential for increasing the understanding of community planning from the period.

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

The area surrounding the confluence of the north and south forks of the Roanoke River was settled in the mid-eighteenth century by Issac Taylor. His property, which soon after his arrival in 1751 consisted of 400 acres, was located in the path of the Ingles Ferry Road as it followed the Roanoke Valley toward the New River plateau (W.P.A.). The position of Taylor's land at the head of a potential seasonal water transportation route and at the juncture of the two agricultural valleys of the north and south forks suggests the eventual development of a regional center.

As early as 1769 John Craig mentioned the "New Derry" congregation meeting on John Rayburn's land on the South Fork and the Great Road (Wilson, p. 75). Rayburn's land seems to have been located immediately adjacent to the forks of the Roanoke. A meetinghouse was constructed, but seems not to have prospered, for it does not show up in the records of Lexington Presbytery in 1786. By 1791 remains of the "old meeting house" were viewed by Hampden-Sydney students and preachers William Hill and John Lyle

☒ See continuation sheet

9. Major Bibliographical References

Barnett, Richard. Interview, September 1985.

Martin, Joseph. A New and Comprehensive Gazetteer of Virginia, Charlottesville: 1835.

Montgomery County Deed, Will, and Land Tax Books.

U.S., Census, 1850.

Virginia Board of Public Works Reports.

Wilson, Howard M. The Lexington Presbytery Heritage. Verona: McClure Press, 1971.

☐ See continuation sheet

Previous documentation on file (NPS):

- ☐ preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested
☐ previously listed in the National Register
☐ previously determined eligible by the National Register
☐ designated a National Historic Landmark
☐ recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey # _____
☐ recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # _____

Primary location of additional data:

- ☒ State historic preservation office
☐ Other State agency
☐ Federal agency
☐ Local government
☐ University
☐ Other

Specify repository:

Virginia Division of Historic Landmarks
221 Governor Street
Richmond, Virginia 23219

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of property twelve acres.

UTM References

A 11.7 56.9 19.2.0 4.1 2.0 19.0.0
Zone Easting Northing
C 11.7 57.0 1.1.0 4.1 2.1 1.4.0

B 11.7 56.9 18.6.0 4.1 2.1 2.6.0
Zone Easting Northing
D 11.7 57.0 1.0.0 4.1 2.0 8.5.0

☐ See continuation sheet

Verbal Boundary Description

Beginning at point A on the south bank of the Roanoke River 140 feet west of the northeast corner of the intersection of Water and Main streets, thence east along the north lot line 60-418-4 to point B, thence south along the west side of VA Route 626 to point C, thence east along the rear (north) of lots 16-418-12 to 60-418-14 to point D, thence south along the east lot line of 60-418-14 to point E, thence west along the north side of VA Route 740 to point

☒ See continuation sheet

Boundary Justification

The boundaries were chosen to include all structures which contribute to the historic character of Lafayette and comprise a unified whole. Areas excluded from the district were characterized by visual and historic discontinuity. The district is bounded by modern residential structures. Four noncontributing buildings are located between and behind contributing buildings in the district.

☐ See continuation sheet

11. Form Prepared By

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organization Gibson Worsham, Architect

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United States Department of the Interior
National Park ServiceNational Register of Historic Places
Continuation SheetPrehistoric and Historic
Resources of Montgomery County
Lafayette Historic District
60-418Section number 7 Page 1

is a bricked-up door in the center bay of the northwest side, suggesting an original plan not unlike the meetinghouse plan popular in the eighteenth century for religious structures in western Virginia. The interior was altered in the late nineteenth century, and extensive additions have been made to the southeast, but the body of the building retains its historic exterior form and appearance. The church is located on the edge of the former muster ground as described in contemporary deeds (Deed Book Q, p. 336).

The remaining contributing houses in the district date from the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Most take the center-passage form with internal stove flues flanking the passage. One takes the contemporary T-plan form. Two of the center-passage houses, as well as a number outside the district's boundaries, have a central gable over the entry bay. In three cases the bay projects under the gable to form a gabled central tower, and in one case it covers a pedimented two-story porch.

The houses with projecting gables, such as 60-418-7, 60-418-8, 60-418-12, and 60-418-13 bear similar details such as returned box cornices, cornerboards with miniature capitals, and wide hipped porches and appear to date from early in the century. The remaining center-passage houses, including 60-418-4, 60-418-17, 60-418-18, and 60-418-20, may date from the second decade of the century. The characteristics of these houses and the T-plan dwelling at 60-418-18 bear similarities that suggest a single builder. These details include a flat facade plane, wooden gutter boards, and small rafter ends applied decoratively in the raking soffits of each gable. Many of the houses have small contributing secondary outbuildings of early twentieth-century date including well houses, latticed gazebos like that at 60-418-8, and early twentieth-century garages.

The Sid Butt Barbershop and House (60-418-3) is a late example of a traditional building form. The one-story two-room building was built of light sawn lumber in 1940 by Sid Butt. Butt housed his barbershop in the smaller room and lived in the large room. The symmetrical three-bay interior belies the two rooms of different sizes behind. The building has been restored for use as a pottery shop and studio.

The only two surviving commercial buildings, of the several originally present on Main Street, include the Gardner Store (60-

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

Prehistoric and Historic
Resources of Montgomery County
Lafayette Historic District
60-418

Section number 7 Page 2

418-2) and the Butt Store (60-418-9). The Gardner Store is a late nineteenth-century one-story gable-fronted store of frame construction. It has a stepped parapet wall above the four-bay facade sheltered by a hipped porch. The walls were sheathed in brick when a large gabled brick addition was made to the rear in ca. 1940. The store takes the regionally familiar form of a symmetrical three-bay front with central door and a storeroom entered through a door in the fourth bay to the northeast. The one-story Butt Store was built in the first quarter of the twentieth century. The three-bay gable-fronted structure also has a parapet front with a bracketed cornice. Both buildings have served as the U. S. Post Office for the village: the Butt Store until 1985, when the Lafayette Post Office closed.

Although Lafayette has seen little development since the early twentieth century, modern ranch houses have been built on several vacant lots, but few are located in the district. The houses are nearly all owner occupied and well maintained.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park ServiceNational Register of Historic Places
Continuation SheetSection number 7 Page 3LAFAYETTE HISTORIC DISTRICT INVENTORY

<u>BLDG. NO.</u>	<u>DATE OF CONSTRUCTION</u>	<u>RESOURCE</u>
60-418-1 Rte. 626	1970s	Modern wood frame dwelling (non-contributing)
60-418-2 Rte. 626	late 19th c. ca. 1940 alter- ations	vernacular, wood frame and brick veneer commercial building (Gardner Store)
60-418-3 Rte. 626	1940	vernacular wood frame commercial/ residential building >(Sid Butt Barbershop and house)
60-418-4 Rte 626.	early 20th c.	vernacular wood frame dwelling
60-418-5 Rte. 626	1980s	modern wood frame dwelling (non-contributing)
60-418-6 Rte. 740	1960s	modern brick dwelling (non-contributing)
60-418-7 Rte. 626	late 19th c.	Victorian vernacular wood frame dwelling
60-418-8 Rte. 626	late 19th c.	Victorian vernacular wood frame dwelling
60-418-9 Rte. 626	early 20th c.	vernacular wood frame commercial building (Butt Store)
60-418-10 Rte. 626	early 19th c. ca. 1900 alter- ations	vernacular wood frame dwelling (Pepper House)

United States Department of the Interior
National Park ServiceNational Register of Historic Places
Continuation SheetSection number 7 Page 4

LAFAYETTE HISTORIC DISTRICT INVENTORY

<u>BLDG. NO.</u>	<u>DATE OF CONSTRUCTION</u>	<u>RESOURCE</u>
60-418-11 Rte. 740	ca.1829	vernacular wood frame dwelling (Preston Waskey House)
60-418-12 Rte. 740	ca.1900	vernacular wood frame dwelling
60-418-13 Rte. 740	late 19th c.	Victorian vernacular wood frame dwelling
60-418-14 Rte. 740	ca. 1847	vernacular brick church (Lafayette Methodist Church)
60-418-15 Rte 740.	ca.1940	modern concrete block dwelling
60-418-16 Rte. 740	late 19th c.	vernacular wood frame dwelling
60-418-17 Rte. 756	late 19th c.	vernacular wood frame dwelling
60-418-18 Rte. 756	late 19th c.	Victorian Vernacular wood frame (bricktex clad) dwelling
60-418-19 Rte. 756	late 19th c.	vernacular wood frame (bricktex clad) dwelling
60-418-20 Union St.	late 19th c.	vernacular wood frame dwelling

United States Department of the Interior
National Park ServiceNational Register of Historic Places
Continuation SheetSection number 7 Page 5

LAFAYETTE HISTORIC DISTRICT INVENTORY

<u>BLDG. NO.</u>	<u>DATE OF CONSTRUCTION</u>	<u>RESOURCE</u>
60-418-21 Rte. 626	ca.1940	modern wood frame (stucco clad) dwelling
60-418-22 Rte. 756	ca.1940	modern wood frame dwelling
60-418-23 Rte. 756	1960s	modern brick dwelling (non-contributing)

United States Department of the Interior
National Park ServiceNational Register of Historic Places
Continuation SheetPrehistoric and Historic
Resources of Montgomery County
Lafayette Historic District
60-418Section number 8 Page 1

(Wilson, p. 75). The interest in the community was revived, however, and under the same sponsorship, because in 1807 John Rayburn states in his will that the "the spot where the meeting house stands shall not be sold while that house is there, but may be sold afterwards" (Montgomery County Will Book I, p. 336). It is possible that the structure dating from before 1791 merely remained standing but unused. In 1818 Samuel Shanklin, William Pepper, and William W. Reyburn appointed James Barnett, Thomas Mitchell, A. H. Robertson, and John Pepper to repair what was by then referred to as Forks Meeting House, either a second building or a renovation of the first. The structure, which was to be used as a school and meetinghouse, was repaired from time to time and finally abandoned (Wilson, p. 76).

In 1822 local landowners George Hancock, James Barnett, John Pepper, Abram Deyerle, Thomas Watteson, Adam Fisher, Phillip Roberts, Thomas Mitchell, Jeremiah Early, Samuel Shanklin, and John Maddox agreed to build a gristmill and sawmill at the forks of the Roanoke on the land owned by the heirs of William Taylor. By 1825 Shanklin, Early, Maddox, Roberts, and Mitchell had sold their shares to the others, and the land where the mill stood was purchased from the Taylors. In that same year it is said that John Pepper laid out a town near the mill, referred to as Fayette in deeds for lots being sold by the Taylors beginning in 1826 (Montgomery County deeds).

In 1828 Fayette was officially established as a town by the General Assembly. Ten acres were designated and laid out in lots, streets, and alleys. The legislation apparently mistakenly identified George Hancock and John B. Goodrich as owners of the land. Hancock, who had moved to Kentucky in 1826, and Goodrich, a teacher in Blacksburg and Christiansburg, may have been the petitioners for the act of establishment. Neither of the men appear in the deed books as owners of any lots in Fayette.

The act names as trustees Joseph Barber, Robert W. P. Carter, Charles L. Barnett, Henry Taylor, Charles Thomas, and Samuel McClure. Owners of lots were to enjoy the same privileges as freeholders of other towns in the commonwealth as soon as they had erected a dwelling of twelve square feet with a brick or stone chimney. The development of Lafayette may have been spurred by proposals in the late 1820s and 1830s to improve the Roanoke River from Salem to the forks, probably through the construction of a canal. Salem was to have been the termination

United States Department of the Interior
National Park ServiceNational Register of Historic Places
Continuation SheetPrehistoric and Historic
Resources of Montgomery County
Lafayette Historic District
60-418Section number 8 Page 2

of the proposed Roanoke Canal of 1815 which would have provided much movement of goods and produce to and from the region.

In fact the town of Lafayette, as it officially styled itself after 1835, was successful in its growth during the 1830s. It was the most populous area between Christiansburg and Salem. In 1829 the General Assembly had established "an inspection of flour and Indian meal at the town of Fayette". In 1835 there were in the town forty-three houses, a large mill, a tavern, two general merchandise stores, a boot and shoe factory, a tanyard, a cooper's shop, four smith shops, and several mechanics (Martin). The earliest map available that includes the town was prepared by James Herron in 1833. It shows the layout of the town, several structures, and the mill and millrace (Virginia Board of Public Works). An active trading component to the economy of Lafayette is suggested by the listing of Thomas Jefferson Deyerle as a "trader" in the 1850 census. Lafayette seems to have been the headquarters of Montgomery County's diminished tobacco trade of 1850. Two men are listed in Deyerle's household as "tobacconists," indicating that Lafayette was serving as a depot for the tobacco farms along the south fork and further south and west.

Lafayette was originally laid out in six blocks including a total of forty-eight lots. While only four are recognizable today, and only two obvious from Herron's map, the original plat of 1826 (which does not survive) probably included the six blocks, with two extending eastward from the present four. Surviving lot shapes indicate that the blocks were approximately four acres in size and each contained eight rectangular half-acre lots arranged in two rows of four each. The ten-acre town called for in the legislation of 1832 suggests that at that time only the northwestern pair of blocks had been developed, an observation confirmed by Herron's map. The streets were named Water, Main, and High, running east and west, and Front, Union, Washington, and Back streets running north and south (Montgomery County deeds).

By 1848 a Methodist church (60-418-14) was constructed on a lot adjacent to the center of the four blocks of present-day Lafayette. The first trustees of the church were White Ryan, James V. Deaton, James R. Pepper, Alexander Deyerle, William Thomas, William A. Heslep, William Davis, and Charles Thomas. White Ryan was the town's principal merchant during the mid-

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Prehistoric and Historic
Resources of Montgomery County
Lafayette Historic District
60-418

Section number 8 Page 3

nineteenth century. The church appears today as a four-bay nave-plan structure of brick, but evidence in the west wall indicates that prior to the late nineteenth-century alterations the church could be entered by a door in the center of that facade, now bricked up. In that case the church is unique in the county in incorporating a meetinghouse plan with entrances on several walls and a pulpit on the long east wall rather than the short wall as at present. Several churches with meetinghouse plans survive from the mid-to-late eighteenth century in the Shenandoah Valley, but this is the only example in Montgomery County. Alterations and additions on the north and east and internal changes make any further analysis difficult. It is said that the church had a gallery constructed for the use of slaves, but no trace remains (W.P.A.).

Pearl Vest, who surveyed the church for the W.P.A. survey of 1936, states there was a public square used as a muster ground during the Civil War. Contemporary deeds indicate that a public square did exist and was comprised of nine square poles subtracted from each of the four lots at the intersection of Main and Union streets. It was located in front of the church.

In 1846 the Southwestern Turnpike bypassed the town. Engineer Lewis Prevost, answering complaints sent by citizens of Lafayette to the Board of Public Works in Richmond, wrote that to accommodate the town would have added three quarters of a mile to the road and would have caused two unnecessary bridges to be built at unfavorable points. He recommended against a route through the town, arguing that to force the transportation of the heavy produce the road was designed to carry over an additional three-quarters of a mile would "injure the many for the benefit of the few". The bypassing of the town by the turnpike probably contributed to most of Lafayette's decline over the next decades. In 1881 the town was said by Pearl Vest to contain one or two stores, a nearby church, and a flouring mill. The flouring mill, said to be the same built by the surrounding landowners in 1823 or soon after, was producing flour for commerce, as the term "flouring" indicates. The mill was known as the Forks Mill. It was destroyed by a storm in 1899 and rebuilt, but only traces of the building remain today west of the district (Virginia Board of Public Works, Southwestern Turnpike paper).

The two stores which operated in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries were owned by Glen Walthall and W. W.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Prehistoric and Historic
Resources of Montgomery County
Lafayette Historic District
60-418

Section number 8 Page 4

Gardner. The Walthall store stood on the east side of Main Street across from the Gardner store, which was opened in 1886 (60-418-2). An Oddfellows Lodge, now gone, was founded in 1899 on the west side of Main Street (Interview, Richard Barnett).

Several houses from the early years of the town remain, including the frame hall-parlor Preston Waskey House (60-418-11) dating from 1829 and a portion of the log John Pepper House (60-418-10) dating from before 1829. Many frame center-passage houses in the village date from the late nineteenth century and the early twentieth century. Alterations to some of the houses have not seriously impaired the significance of their form or detail. Outbuildings associated with these houses help illustrate the use of the domestic space surrounding the houses.

The town has experienced some growth in the years since the early twentieth century, but with the principal exceptions of the loss of the mill on the northwest edge of the village and the Walthall Store, the district retains the sense of an early twentieth-century town with elements from earlier periods.

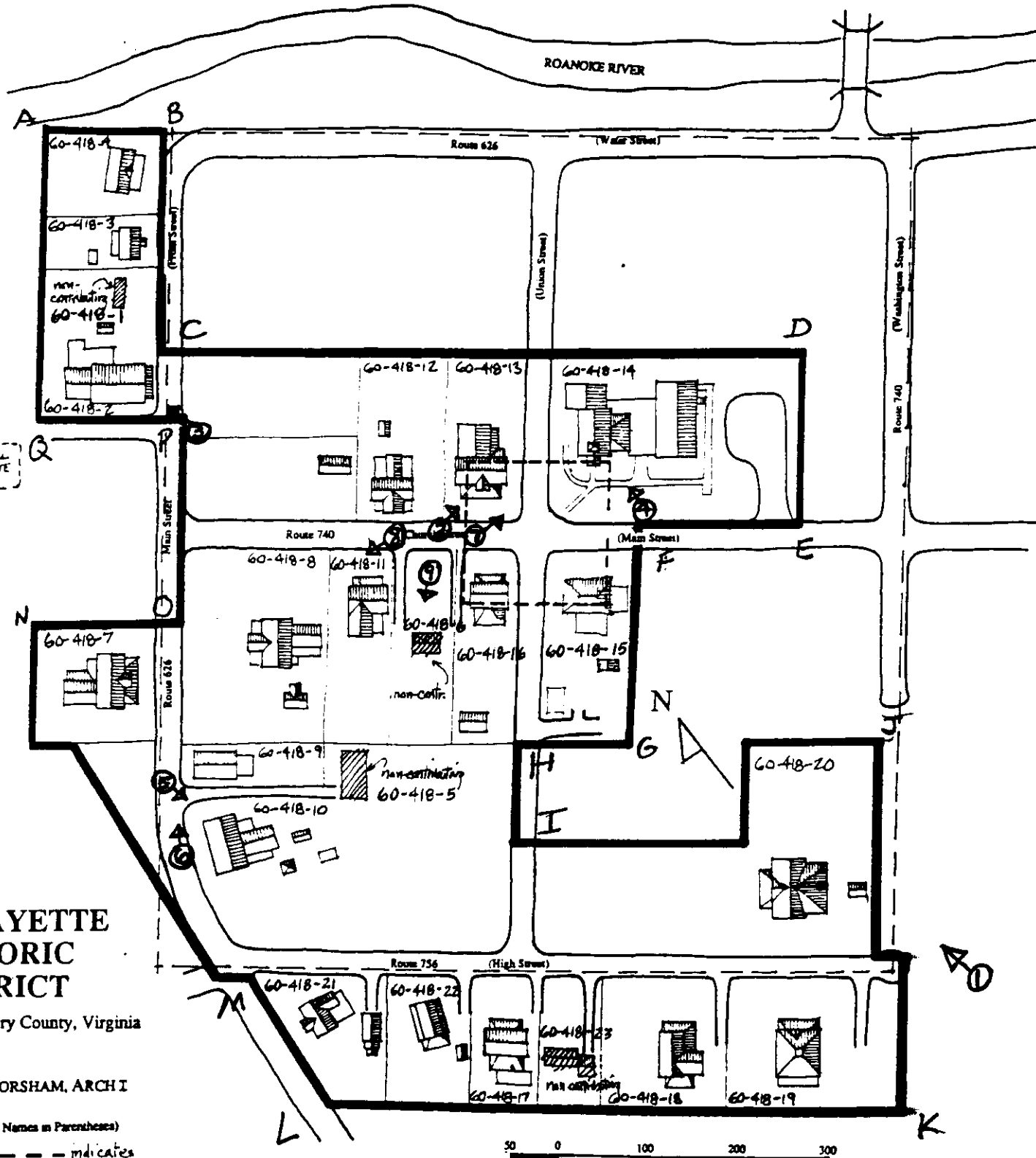
United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Prehistoric and Historic
Resources of Montgomery County
Lafayette Historic District
60-418

Section number 10 Page 1

thence south along the east lot line of the house on the east side of Union Street to point G, thence west along the rear (south) of said lot to point H, thence south along the west side of Union Street to point I, thence east along the north lot line of 60-418-20 to point J, thence south along the east lot lines of said lot and 60-418-19 to point K, thence west along the south lots of the houses on the south side of VA Route 756 to point L, thence north along the east side of VA Route 626 to point M, thence north along the rear (west) lot lines of the houses on the west side of VA Route 626 to point N, thence east along the north lot line of 60-418-7 to point O, thence north along the east side of VA Route 626 to point P, thence west along the south lot line of 60-418-2 to point Q, thence north along the rear (west) lot lines of the lots on the west side of VA Route 626 to the point of origin.



LAFAYETTE HISTORIC DISTRICT

Montgomery County, Virginia

GIBSON WORSHAM, ARCH I

(Historic Street Names in Parentheses)

— indicates
the original square
— indicates
4 of the 6 original blocks

non-contributing building

PHOTO KEY ②

